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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 322

Offered March 1, 2022

Celebrating the life of James Ira Spurrier, Jr.

Patron—Campbell, J.L.

WHEREAS, James Ira Spurrier, Jr., also known as Junior Spurrier, a decorated veteran who served our nation during World War II and a distinguished Virginian who was born and raised in Castlewood in Russell County, died on February 25, 1984; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier helped support his siblings and moved often while his family sought job opportunities during the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier joined many of the other young men of his generation in service to our nation during World War II and deployed to the Pacific Theater in 1942; after sustaining injuries in New Guinea, he returned to the United States for medical treatment, then redeployed to Europe in 1944; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier was assigned to Company G, 134th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division and became a messenger and scout after his promotion to staff sergeant; and

WHEREAS, in September 1944, Junior Spurrier earned the Distinguished Service Cross and a Purple Heart for his heroic leadership during a one-man assault on a heavily fortified enemy position near Lay-Saint-Christophe, France; and

WHEREAS, the following November, Junior Spurrier earned the Congressional Medal of Honor and similar medals from France and Belgium for his gallantry during Company G's advance on the village of Achain, France, when he circled around to the rear of the village by himself; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier singlehandedly assaulted numerous enemy positions during an intense hours-long battle by using American and captured German weapons and ammunition; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier forced the enemy to retreat into a barn filled with hay and barrels of fuel, then set the barn on fire, and killed or captured several Nazi soldiers and one officer; and

WHEREAS, over the course of these two battles, Junior Spurrier accounted for 36 enemy casualties and 32 captured prisoners, earning the nickname "Task Force Spurrier"; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier has also been referred to as the "unofficial Sergeant York," a reference to another Appalachian warrior from the coalfields of Tennessee, Alvin C. York, who was one of the most decorated United States Army soldiers of World War I; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier was awarded almost the same number of prestigious United States Army medals as another distinguished hero of World War II, Audie Murphy, receiving only one Purple Heart less; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier returned to the Commonwealth and briefly played as pitcher of the Galax Leafs baseball team, then reenlisted in the military and served during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, in later life, Junior Spurrier operated a radio and television repair business and subsequently retired to eastern Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier was laid to rest in Mountain Home National Cemetery in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Junior Spurrier is fondly remembered and greatly missed by numerous family members and friends; and

WHEREAS, unlike Sergeant York and Audie Murphy, Junior Spurrier has never been recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia, his home; and

WHEREAS, a fundraising effort is underway to create a memorial site for Junior Spurrier in Castlewood, with plans to display this resolution in bronze; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of James Ira Spurrier, Jr., a brave Virginian who served our nation during World War II; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the family of James Ira Spurrier, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory and to be placed at his memorial site in Castlewood on behalf of all Virginians and veterans.

INTRODUCED

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